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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KMCC](#) [KISL](#) [JO](#)
SUBJECT: LOWER HOUSE ENDORSES REFORM OF POLITICAL PARTIES
LAW

REF: A. AMMAN 1022
[B](#). 06 AMMAN 8908
[C](#). AMMAN 528
[D](#). 06 AMMAN 5945

Classified By: Classified By: Ambassador David Hale, Reasons 1.4 (B) & (D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) The Chamber of Deputies endorsed the government's bill to reform the political parties law with little substantive amendment. We expect the appointed upper house to endorse the bill quickly. The bill will simplify registration procedures for new parties and provide a mechanism for some government funding of parties in the future if the government follows up with implementing regulations (ref A).

[1](#)2. (C) Some political party leaders have criticized the government's bill, saying it does not do enough to promote the role of parties in Jordanian politics, and that by requiring parties to have at least 500 members, the bill will force some of Jordan's 33 boutique-sized registered parties to close down. Head of the Al-Resalah (Message) Party Dr. Hazem Qashou told poloff he expects as many as two thirds of Jordan's 33 parties will have to close or join with another. COMMENT: With the notable exception of the Islamic Action Front, most political parties in Jordan are little more than dinner clubs and have little to no impact on the political process. If some of these close it may marginally strengthen those that remain. The King's objective is to encourage moderates to unite behind a single, national party better positioned to compete against the Islamists. END COMMENT.

[1](#)3. (C) With two weeks left in the current session, parliamentary leadership is making a concerted effort to address the four political reforms highlighted by the king at the opening of parliament - bills on municipal government, political parties, press and publications, and freedom of information (ref B). Barring unforeseen delays the Senate is expected to discuss the political parties and the press and publications bills before the end of the month. Meanwhile members of both houses are working behind the scenes to iron out their differences over the municipal government reform bill. The key difference in the versions endorsed by each house addresses who would appoint the professional municipal manager who will serve alongside each mayor (ref C). Finally, MP Abdullah Al Jazi told poloff the freedom of information bill would be debated soon in the full lower house.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Comment: If Parliament is successful in completing debate on most of these bills it will be a step forward in fulfilling the political reform vision laid out by the palace at the "We are all Jordan" national unity conference in July 2006 (ref D). END COMMENT.

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